

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 TRSE-00 FMC-04

CG-00 RSR-01 /133 W

----- 061321

R 151100 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4088

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0539

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJECT: MINTOFF'S DRYDOCKS PROBLEMS

REF: VALLETTA 0177

1. PM'S PLANS TO ADDRESS MALTA DRYDOCKS WORKERS IN NEARBY PUBLIC SQUARE AFTERNOON MARCH 15 RAISING CONSIDERABLE LOCAL EXCITEMENT. OCCASION LIKELY A RESPONSE TO GROWING DIS-SATISFACTION AMONG DRYDOCKS WORKERS OVER GOM'S FAILURE INCREASE WAGES AND RESOLVE WAGE ANOMALIES BETWEEN INDUSTRIAL AND CLERICAL WORKERS. THESE PROBLEMS WERE EXACERBATED BY MINTOFF'S ACCURATIONS ON DRYDOCK'S FINANCIAL LOSSES DURING PAST YEAR (VALLETTA 2217), AND BY HIS PLANS TO REDUCE OVERTIME AT THE YARD.

2. THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE GENERAL WORKERS UNION HAS CALLED EMERGENCY MEETING WITH REPS OF METAL WORKERS AND CLERICAL UNIONS (WHICH REPRESENT GREAT MAJORITY OF DRYDOCKS WORKERS) TO TAKE PLACE THIS MORNING. TODAY'S GWU MALTESE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPERS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT GWU HAD DECIDED

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TO INSTRUCT ITS THREE REPS NOT TO PARTICIPATE ON THE DRYDOCKS
MANAGEMENT BOARD " UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND UNTIL THE
SITUATION BECOMES CLEARER."

3. THESE DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOW CLOSELY SERIES OF RUMOURS,
INCLUDING DEVMIN HYZLER'S RESIGNATION OR THREAT TO DO SO
(PROBABLY HAS SOME SUBSTANCE), POSSIBILITY OF IMMINENT MINTOFF
CALL FOR ELECTIONS (UNLIKELY IN VIEW CURRENT UNCERTAIN LEVEL OF
HIS POPULARITY), AND THAT 1973/73 BUDGET WILL BE TABLED IN NEXT
WEEK OR TWO (PROBABLY TRUE). IN REGARD TO LATTER, OPPOSITION
NATIONALIST PRESS HAS BEEN PREDICTING UNREALISTICALLY HIGH
WAGE INCREASE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN ORDER RAISE EXPECTATIONS
AND CAUSE DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN ACTUAL INCREASES ARE ANNOUNCED.

4. DESPITE THESE SIGNS OF POTENTIALLY SERIOUS POLITICAL
DIFFICULTIES, MINTOFF'S CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL TALENTS MAY
SEE HIM THROUGH. SEEMS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT HIS ABILITIES
ARE BEING PUT TO A MAJOR TEST. GETZ

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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